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Reagan Sees Hill Leaders Pressure for Latin Aid Rises

By Joanne Omang
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Reagan administration yesterday stepped up pressure on Congress to approve military aid to the government of El Salvador, winning an endorsement from the No. 2 House Democrat and springing a moribund aid package from a House committee.

Majority Leader James C. Wright Jr. (D-Tex.), one of several congressional leaders who met with President Reagan at the White House, told reporters afterward it is "a policy of folly" to provide aid to El Salvador to fight leftist guerrillas "on a week-to-week basis" rather than providing "enough to win. We like to give them enough not to lose . . . I think we ought to give them enough."

Meanwhile, Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) charged that the CIA has been funding Jose Napoleon Duarte, the apparent winner of Sunday's presidential election in El Salvador, for the past two years. The charge could hinder chances for approval of Reagan's aid package, which has been billed as support for moderate forces within El Salvador.

In a speech to the Senate, Helms said CIA officials told the Senate Intelligence Committee in a briefing last week about the aid, which included direct funding, use of radio and television facilities and technical assistance.

Helms, who is not a member of the intelligence committee, quoted the official as saying, "We did everything but stuff the ballot boxes."

But Sen. David F. Durenberger (R-Minn.), a member of the committee, said he did not remember any such remark. The CIA officials, he said, "gave us the impression there had been some involvement, not with any particular candidate but with various parties."

Durenberger said the briefing left him and other committee members "horribly confused" because they had been told earlier there was no CIA involvement in any elections. He said the committee had asked for further briefings on the subject.

Reagan used two speaking engagements yesterday to insist that U.S. aid is crucial to help El Salvador hold off Marxist guerrillas who could ultimately threaten the United States. He has scheduled a nationwide television speech on his Central America policy for 8 p.m. today.

Such continuing pressure has apparently pried a Senate-passed package of emergency aid for Central America out of committee in the House, according to congressional sources.

They said a House-Senate conference will probably be scheduled next week on the package, which provides \$62 million for El Salvador and \$21 million for Nicaraguan *contra* rebels fighting the leftist government.

House Speaker Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill Jr. (D-Mass.) opposes the aid and did not attend the meeting with Reagan. Wright, splitting openly with O'Neill for the first time, nonetheless predicted that some funds for El Salvador will be approved.

"My feeling is that most people in Congress do support the forces of freedom in El Salvador," he said. "It doesn't make any sense to have a friend who is bleeding and refuse to give him a tourniquet."

Reagan made that point yesterday to about 300 business executives of the Council of the Americas, whose members together do 80 percent of all U.S. trade with Latin America.

If the United States does not help Central Americans repel "Soviet-bloc and Cuban-backed insurgents," Reagan told them, "there will be grim consequences to pay. It's not only their security; it's our security. If we face a flood of refugees and a direct threat on our own southern border, it will not be because we acted but because we refused to do what was necessary to avert the crisis."

Langhorne A. (Tony) Motley, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, talked openly to the same group about the role that the CIA-directed mining of Nicaraguan waters plays in U.S. policy there.

"Mining is a part of the pressure—economic, political and others—to modify Nicaragua's behavior," he said.

Motley did not link the mining directly to the *contras*, but when he visits Nicaragua, Motley continued, "they only want to talk about the *contras* . . . It's the biggest bargaining chip out there."

Motley said U.S. policy seeks to end Nicaragua's Soviet and Cuban ties, to reduce its military arsenal, to democratize its internal politics and to end its aid to the guerrilla movement in El Salvador, which Motley said maintains a communications headquarters in Nicaragua.

"If they don't know where that is, we'll give them the street address. It's in downtown Managua," he said.

Reagan also brought up the debate over Central America indirectly in a luncheon speech honoring the late President Harry S. Truman on the centennial of his birth, recalling that Democrats and Republicans "were united in their opposition to tyranny" during Truman's presidency.

A Democratic senator said he thought Congress might approve a small amount of funding for the Nicaraguan *contra* program, either to shut it down or to restrict it firmly for use in stopping arms shipments to the Salvadoran guerrillas.

But a House Republican aide said there is little zeal in the GOP for fighting to save the *contra* program. Senate Majority Whip Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) agreed. "It's pretty clear now that Nicaragua [*contra* aid] cannot survive," he told reporters.

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Helms says CIA rigged election in El Salvador

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., has charged that the the CIA "bought the election" of El Salvador's apparent president-elect, Napoleon Duarte, and the Salvadoran people should "take whatever steps they deem necessary in light of the facts."

El Salvador has had several military coups in its history and Mr. Helms added to the speculation that another could occur, saying, "In assuming power through a rigged election, Mr. Duarte runs the real risk of touching off another conflagration in a war-torn land."

Mr. Helms said Mr. Duarte, who is the apparent winner of Sunday's runoff election for president, is a "socialist" who is "without a mandate to rule or the arguments to produce national unity."

In the same statement released last night by his office, Mr. Helms said the right-wing candidate, Roberto D'Aubuisson, has been unjustly accused of links to death squads and that he actually "espoused the principles of the Republican Party in the U.S."

Mr. Helms charged yesterday that the CIA and State Department for two years have funneled funds and other assistance directly into Mr. Duarte's campaign without Mr. Reagan's approval.

No response was immediately available from the White House or State Department to the senator's charges.

Last week, Mr. Helms asked President Reagan to remove the U.S. ambassador in El Salvador, Thomas Pickering, because he allegedly aided Mr. Duarte's candidacy, but yesterday Mr. Helms said the ambassador was but one player in a larger drama.

Mr. Helms said that the funding decision was made by the Interagency Group on Central America that coordinates policy in the executive branch.

Mr. Helms said that the U.S. efforts to control the election outcome undermine, "The whole purpose of our policy in El Salvador ... to build democracy."

Mr. Helms said that the support reportedly given to Mr. Duarte included funds for 400 precinct organizers, a model press operation, technical advice and funds for the "computer voter registration system that disenfranchised 20 percent of the voters the first time around."

The United States aided in the voter registration procedures, which were opposed by Mr. D'Aubuisson's party.

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